

Thai News Update: 17 April 2020

1. Govt to sign Asean pact on Covid-19

Source: Bangkok Post ([Link](#))

The cabinet has agreed to endorse the Asean Special Meeting Declaration that underscores the region's strength of cooperation and capabilities to deliver health protection in a collective battle against the Covid-19 pandemic. Government spokeswoman Narumon Pinyosinwat said 15 April the government has resolved to endorse the draft declaration and the draft joint statement issued by Asean and its Plus three dialogue partners -- China, Japan and South Korea -- which earlier agreed in principle to set up a joint fund to combat the coronavirus pandemic following a virtual summit also attended by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha.

2. Covid control measures likely to stay

Source: Bangkok Post ([Link](#))

Disease control measures that restrict everyday life are unlikely to be relaxed, but it will depend on how well people cooperate, a government spokesman said on 16 April. Dr Taweasilp Visanuyothin, spokesman of the government's Centre for Covid-19 Situation Administration, said on 16 April that the most important criteria for relaxing the measures are public health, followed by economic and social factors. "Decisions about any relaxation are difficult. There may first have to be a level of social distancing that people must observe," he said. "For example, for the reopening of shopping centres, everyone must wear a face mask and there must be enough open space to prevent crowd congestion. If there is an excess of visitors, they may have to wait outside. For easing restrictions on barbers' shops, there must be discipline."

3. Thai-Malaysian border set to open this weekend

Source: The Thaiger ([Link](#))

The Thai-Malaysian border is set to reopen this weekend to assist the struggling rubber trade, causing locals to express concern that a spike in new Covid 19 cases could result in Thailand because of the move. Security officials, however, are assuring the public that intensive screening measures are in place in anticipation of the re-opening. Speculation that up to 100,000 people could flood into Thailand at the border crossings, creating havoc at the checkpoint, has been dismissed by the SBPAC Secretary-General, who said "these are just rumours as the number of people who officially registered online to cross according to the embassy, are fewer than 8,000."

4. First of 620 returnees touch down in Thailand

Source: The Nation ([Link](#))

Thailand has preparations in place for 620 Thais being repatriated from overseas this week amid the global virus outbreak, Dr Taweessin Visanuyothin, spokesman of the government's Centre for Covid-19 Situation Administration, said on Thursday (April 16). The first batch of Thai returnees landed at Suvarnabhumi Airport at 11am on 16 April aboard Etihad flight EY9827 from the United Arab Emirates. Two and a half hours later, a second batch of 55 returnees stepped off flight Q2-9350 from the Maldives.

5. MBK goes forth with new mall

Source: Bangkok Post ([Link](#))

Despite the pandemic hobbling malls, MBK is continuing to build a community mall worth 600 million baht in Nonthaburi's Tiwanon area as planned. Somphol Tripopnart, the company's managing director, said land reclamation for The Nine Center in Tiwanon in front of Riverdale Golf Club began recently, with the opening scheduled for the end of this year or the first quarter of next year. The one-storey The Nine Center Tiwanon project is being built on 33 rai. Once completed, the mall will contain retail space of 20,000 square metres sectioned for fashion, health and beauty, services and food, with Gourmet Market, the supermarket chain under The Mall Group, on board with a preliminary agreement to open a 1,000 sq m branch there.

6. Airlines, hotels push vouchers

Source: Bangkok Post ([Link](#))

Airlines and hotels are betting on future demand as operators start to sell vouchers to guests to raise short-term liquidity in the midst of the pandemic. Some airlines in Thailand have launched promotional campaigns for future flights on the assumption that business will return later this year. Nuntaporn Komonsittivate, head of commercial at Thai Lion Air, said TLA will soon introduce a promotion for domestic customers to keep up with competitors that are starting to sell advance vouchers. Budget carrier Thai Vietjet is offering gift vouchers at its website that can be used for discounts to get cheaper tickets when passengers book seats from June 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021.

7. Lazada: Pandemic making e-commerce mainstream

Source: Bangkok Post ([Link](#))

Lazada Thailand says the coronavirus outbreak will turn online shopping into the new normal in Thailand, and the e-commerce giant is offering incentives to attract 50,000 offline small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to the platform to assist them during this difficult time.

"From mid-March to mid-April, Lazada saw a 100% rise in sale transactions," Paradee Sinthawanarong, chief marketing of Lazada Thailand, said in a live-streaming press conference. "Sales value jumped 130% from early February to early April as consumers spent more time online while staying or working from home." According to Priceza, a shopping search engine and price comparison platform, the country's e-commerce sales transactions jumped 80% in March.

8. Dusit's new service lets you order food for delivery to 'frontline heroes'

Source: The Nation ([Link](#))

Dusit International, one of Thailand's leading hotel and property development companies, has expanded its food delivery service in Bangkok to include a "Food for Heroes" option, which allows customers to purchase meals for delivery to key workers in the city. Orders can be placed now from two Dusit properties in the capital – Baan Dusit Thani (Sala Daeng) and Dusit Suites Hotel Ratchadamri Bangkok – via a central call centre on 02-200-9009, or via Line @baandusitthani. Meals for donation range in price from Bt100 to Bt120 (with a minimum order of 10 boxes). The service is available daily from 10am to 8pm.

9. Finance, Transport ministries to set up ad hoc panel to help THAI

Source: The Nation ([Link](#))

The Finance and Transport ministries will set up a joint working panel to help the national carrier Thai Airways International (THAI) to seek ways of reviving its operation, Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak said on Thursday (April 16). Somkid joined other ministers in a meeting with THAI executives on 16 April to hear details made in the effort of stabilising the loss-making airline. Finance Minister Uttama Savanayana said he is waiting for THAI to come up with a clearer rehabilitation plan before he can decide how much cash the airline needs to boost its liquidity.